‘Record number to choose from’

ENTRIES EVERYWHERE: MP Theresa May and husband Philip judge the 180 entries in her Christmas card competition and (inset) the winning design. Ref:121551-4

MAIDENHEAD: Home Secretary Theresa May had a tough decision of another kind to make on Friday when she judged her annual Christmas card competition.

Every year the Maidenhead MP challenges the area’s children to design her festive greetings card which will be sent to top politicians including the prime minister.

A record 180 children took part in the contest run in the Advertiser, the entries filling two offices at our Bell Street headquarters for the judging.

Mrs May, helped by her husband Philip, had the difficult job of whittling them down to an overall winner and four runners-up that will be printed on the back of the card.

The Home Secretary said: “It’s been a brilliant year with a record number of entries and huge imagination in all of the cards we have seen. It really was difficult to pick out the winner.”

The couple eventually agreed on the design by Caitlin Bickford, eight, which featured baby Jesus in his crib but also a snowman and presents.

Mrs May said: “It tells the Christmas story but has fun elements too, like presents, a snowman and a Christmas tree.”

Her husband added: “It’s beautifully simple and has all the elements of a traditional christmas – there’s quite a lot of thought gone into it.”

The runners-up were Mila Heath, eight, Sophie Jeffs, seven, Hannah Morgan, seven, and Ben Ryland, seven.

Damning report

Bisham: Dad who took children out of school ‘not surprised’

By Simon Meechan
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A PARENT who took his child out of Bisham Primary School has criticised leadership at the school which was been deemed ‘inadequate’ by Ofsted.

Inspectors visited the Church of England school in Church Lane on Tuesday, September 23, and Wednesday, September 24, to carry out a full inspection.

The Ofsted report, released on Thursday, November 13, has rated Bisham School as ‘inadequate’, which is the lowest possible rating.

It criticises the school for ‘weak’ teaching, with ‘too many’ pupils not making enough progress, while teachers’ marking and feedback does not help the children improve.

It adds: “The school does not ensure that pupils are safe at all times.”

The report’s findings follow a petition from a group of parents who fear the school could be forced to become an academy.

The petition backs headteacher Jim Cooke, and asks for the Royal Borough to give parents a say in the school’s future.

However, parent Gerard Tilley who had two children at the school has moved one to Furze Platt Junior School, while he took another daughter out of Bisham for three weeks in the 2014 summer term.

She has since started at Sir William Borlase’s Grammar School in Marlow.

He says the report’s findings have not come as a shock.

He said:”It’s corroborated everything that we were aware of, and a few things we were not. I’m not surprised by any of its findings.”

Mr Tilley said some parent governors pulled their children from Bisham after ‘losing confidence’ in the leadership.

He said: “They felt nothing was going to change. The headmaster did not seem accountable to them or anyone else.”

Mr Tilley, who says Bisham appears to be a ‘lovely school’ on first impressions, added: “It should have an amazing performance. They should be breaking all the records. It doesn’t do that, it barely washes its face in terms of performance.”

Speed Read

BISHAM CE Primary School has been rated ‘inadequate’ by school inspectors. One parent who took two children out of the school says he is not surprised by the Ofsted report’s findings.

Head to challenge Ofsted ‘errors’

BISHAM: Headteacher Jim Cooke claims Bisham School’s damning Ofsted report contains 56 inaccuracies

The report which deems Mr Cooke’s school to be ‘inadequate’ is being formally challenged by senior staff.

Bisham School says it is making a complaint about the report, which came after the school’s September inspection – its second in four months.

In May Ofsted deemed behaviour at the school to be ‘good’, but the latest report marks it as inadequate. Mr Cooke says he and his staff have found 56 inaccuracies in the report.

He says the primary school is ‘confused’ as to why inspectors picked out behaviour as a negative in the latest report, after finding it to be good in April.

He said: “We do not recognise where that’s coming from. We think that perhaps the inspectors got that wrong.”

He says inspectors failed to acknowledge that some of the behaviour they deemed to be bad came from pupils with special needs.

Mr Cooke added: “We think our teaching is good, we know that it’s not yet outstanding, and that’s where we want to be.”

The school, which has 110 pupils on the roll, has to submit a formal complaint within 10 days of the report being published.

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Saturday 6th December 10-12am
Is your child approaching their third birthday? Why not pop in for a coffee and see our Nursery in action! Bring your children and enjoy some time in our setting, where you can experience a flavour of what we do and speak to our friendly staff about your child and the future of their education.
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Or just pop along...
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MA737695

Ornament sale event

WHITE WALTHAM: The Sequela Foundation is holding a bric-a-brac sale.

The sale will run at the charity’s premises in Grove Park Business Estate on Tuesday afternoon.

It will raise money for Sequela which provides free support and therapies for people with neurological conditions.

Open day at Herries

COOKHAM DEAN: Herries Preparatory School will open its doors for prospective parents on Wednesday.

Headteacher Sophie Green will give a talk at 9.30am before pupils give guided tours of the school in Dean Lane.

Call 01628 483350.

Parked car targeted

BRAY: A laptop, briefcase and wallet were stolen from a parked car.

Police say that between 7.25pm and 10.15pm on Tuesday, November 11, a car in Old Mill Lane had its rear passenger window smashed. A thief then took the items from the passenger footwell.